

ESF 8 Health & Medical Area Command Bulletin

PREPARING FOR FLOODING IN THE GREEN RIVER VALLEY

Public Health
Seattle & King County



August 21, 2009

Bulletin #5

The Situation (New)

Due to damage along the Howard Hanson Dam, which provides flood control along the Green River, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has indicated that the dam will only operate at 30% capacity this winter. Therefore, there is a much greater risk of significant flooding during periods of heavy rain throughout the lower Green River Valley, including the cities of Auburn, Kent, Renton, and Tukwila. The USACE is taking a number of steps to try and minimize the flood risk. Contractors have begun building a second grout curtain to help reduce seepage coming from the dam. However, the USACE does not anticipate this will create a full solution to the problems with the dam by this flood season.

The cities of Auburn, Kent, Renton and Tukwila, King County government agencies and private utility partners are working closely with the USACE to prepare for the 2009 flood season. Primary efforts underway include identifying evacuation routes, developing an evacuation and public warning strategy, planning general population and medical needs shelters and assessing critical infrastructure (e.g. power, natural gas, water, sewer and transportation) impacts that may result from the floods.

Key planning assumptions include:

- Moderate to severe building and infrastructure impacts may occur throughout the Green River Valley ranging from SR 18 to the south, up to I-405 to the north.
- Utility outages may last days or weeks
- Major and minor roadways throughout the Green River Valley, including parts of SR 167 may be impassable
- Severe flooding may prohibit reoccupation of residences and businesses for weeks or months

Environmental Health Risks of Flooding: Mitigating Water Contamination (New)

In preparation for possible flooding, a primary objective for the Health and Medical Area Command is to assess potential health risks associated with flooding, and work with local government, private sector and community partners to minimize or prevent potential impacts to the public's health.

After a flood, there are many possible health risks to a community, including those created by contaminants that are likely present in flood waters. Flood waters generally become contaminated from a variety of sources including: oils, pesticides and fertilizers from road and agricultural runoff, hazardous materials such as fuel and chemicals, as well as biological contaminants from fecal material, waste water and overflow from sewer systems. Contamination can create health risks and cause added damage to equipment and building structures making clean up after the flood more difficult.

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About this Bulletin:

Public Health –Seattle & King County has activated the Health & Medical Area Command to coordinate health, medical and mortuary planning for regional hazards including H1N1 influenza and the Howard Hanson Dam –Green River Valley flood risks. We will be issuing bi-monthly bulletins on each of these topics to outline key situational updates, planning activities and information specific to health, medical and mortuary response.

critical resources

[King County Flood Services](#)

[King County Office of Emergency Management](#)

[Public Health – Seattle & King County](#)

[US Army Corps of Engineers](#)

[Flood insurance](#)

[Personal & Family Preparedness](#)

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READY?

Translated
into 7
languages

Available at:
<http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/water-and-land/flooding/floodplans/0907-GrnRivFldPrep-Eng.pdf>



Environmental Health Risks of Flooding: Mitigating Water Contamination

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The following steps can be taken before the flood season to help prepare your business or property.

Install Sewer Backflow Valves

Flooding can cause sewage from sanitary sewer lines to back up into homes and businesses through plumbing drain pipes, and even into nearby properties that may not actually be flooded. These backups can cause damage that is difficult to repair and can create health hazards. Sewer backflow valves are designed to block drain pipes temporarily, and prevent reverse flow of sewage in the lines. These are available in a variety of designs and should be installed by a licensed plumber or contractor who will ensure the work is done correctly with the appropriate permits and according to local codes. For more information see:

http://www.fema.gov/library/file?type=publishedFile&file=how2007_sewer.pdf&fileid=29d462c0-0d5c-11dd-aeb1-001185636a87

Protect Wells from Contamination by Flooding

Proper well construction will help protect your well against contamination. A licensed well-drilling contractor can inspect your well and suggest improvements. For additional information on improvements that can help protect your well see:

http://www.fema.gov/library/file?type=publishedFile&file=how2026_wells.pdf&fileid=721c6a00-0d5c-11dd-aeb1-001185636a87

Protect Your Septic System from Damage or Flooding

Flooding or other damage to a private septic system increases the possibility of sewage contaminating surface waters or drinking water sources.

For a list of steps that can be taken to prepare a septic system see:

http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/pdf/WWW/publications/pipeline/PL_SU06.pdf

Planning Recommendations (New)

- ✓ **Review your flood insurance policies**
 - Evaluate your policy for structure and contents coverage
 - Discuss with your insurance agent whether your coverage includes damage caused by sewer backups or flooding
- ✓ **Purchase flood insurance**
 - If you do not have flood insurance contact your insurance agent or visit www.floodsmart.gov
- ✓ **Contact your local office of emergency management**
 - Find out how to receive warning information or emergency alerts
 - Inquire for more information on local resources for sandbags
- ✓ **Identify options for flood proofing your facility**
 - Consider hiring an engineer that can evaluate your facility determine strategies for protecting your property
 - Learn more from FEMA at Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) information on preparing businesses <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3262>
- ✓ **Talk to your vendors and suppliers**
 - Discuss continuity of service disruptions that may occur as a result of evacuation or business relocation
 - If you rely on local vendors, find out what they are doing to plan for business disruptions caused by flooding
- ✓ **Plan for the evacuation and relocation of patients/residents**
 - Identify and obtain any evacuation equipment, assistance aids or training that may be needed
 - Ensure evacuation plan includes movement of medical records and personal medications that patients/residents may need for at least a week
 - Identify other facilities or organizations that would be willing to accept your patients/residents if they need to be evacuated
 - Discuss requirements for long-term placement of these patients or residents if reoccupation of your current facility will be delayed
- ✓ **Talk to staff and clients about personal and family preparedness**
 - Encourage staff to identify plans for getting to and from work if transportation is disrupted in the Green River Valley

upcoming events

Green River Flood Response Planning: Public Health and Medical Response Briefing

August 27, 2009
9am-12pm
Valley Medical Center Auditorium
(First Floor, West Side)
400 South 43rd Street,
Renton WA 98055

H1N1 Flu: Public Health and Medical Response Briefing

August 31, 2009
9am-12pm
Seattle Children's Hospital Auditorium
4800 Sand Point Way NE,
Seattle, WA 98105

Lower Green River Valley Public Safety Meeting

(coordinated by King County)

Sept. 9, 2009
6pm-8:30 pm
Cascade Room,
Lindbloom Student Center,
Green River Community College
12401 SE 320th St., Auburn
For more information
contact: Katy Vanderpool,
at 206-296-8362, or
katy.vanderpool@kingcounty.gov

***Sign up for
email alerts
from Public Health –
Seattle & King County
about Green River
Basin Flooding**

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/gr/enriverbasin.aspx>

questions?

Please email

healtheoc@kingcounty.gov

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